

I hope, as we stay united to make sure that we do the best job we can in fighting these fires, that people stay united in doing this. It's an important moment. It's an important time for people to stay bound up in their compassion and in their desire to fight off this devastating disaster that's befallen you all.

And so it's been my honor to come. I look forward to shaking as many hands as I can. This is a—I know it's a tough moment in a lot of people's lives, there's just no doubt in my mind. But just like this war we're under, I believe out of evil can come some great good. It's hard to tell it right now. It's hard to tell it. I know it's hard to tell it. It's easy for me; you say, yes, sure, he flies down in Air Force One and comes here and says that. It's easy for him to say it. But that's what I believe, because I do believe there is a

gracious and almighty God that's looking out after the people who've been affected.

So hang in there. Hang in there, you're brave and great people. Thanks for giving me a chance to come by and say hello. May God bless you, and may God bless your families.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:48 a.m. in the multipurpose room at Round Valley High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jane Dee Hull of Arizona; Chad Etnmueller, chief development officer, Grand Canyon Chapter, American Red Cross; Dale Bosworth, Chief, U.S. Forest Service; Mayor Gene Kelly of Show Low, AZ; Mayor Ginny Handorf of Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ; and Mayor Kay Dyson of Springerville, AZ. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Implement International Conventions Against Terrorism

June 25, 2002

Earlier today I signed into law the implementing legislation for two very important United Nations international conventions against terrorism: the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. I thank the Congress, especially the judiciary committees, for its hard work in passing this legislation, which will strengthen our campaign against global terrorism. The Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of these Conventions last December. Now that this legislation has been enacted, the United States will deposit its instruments of ratification at the United Nations and become a party to these two Conventions.

These two Conventions strengthen international efforts to defeat terrorism of global reach. They underscore—along with 10 other international terrorism conventions—the broad moral consensus that violence against innocent civilians is a criminal act and must be punished. These Conventions also require parties to them to take practical steps to bring terrorists and their supporters to justice. The Terrorist Bombings Convention creates a new and important mechanism for nations to cooperate in investigating and prosecuting terrorist crimes. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism strengthens our continuing efforts to cut off the flow of funds to terrorist groups.

In Canada this week, I will be discussing with leaders from other industrialized nations ways we can ensure that all countries take stronger legal measures against terrorism. In particular, I urge all countries to join us in becoming party to these Conventions and fully adhering to U.N. Security Council Resolutions to stop terrorism, particularly U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373, which denies safe haven to terrorists and prohibits terrorist financing, recruitment, and access to weapons and other

support. I will continue to work with other leaders around the world to build a consensus that terrorism, whatever the excuse, is unacceptable. Working together, America and the other freedom-loving nations of the world are moving towards a day when our children can live free from the fear of terrorism and free to achieve their dreams.

NOTE: H.R. 3275, approved June 25, was assigned Public Law No. 107-197.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Legislation To Increase the Public Debt Limit

June 25, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am writing to ask that the bipartisan cooperation you have shown in our war against terror and creation of a new Department of Homeland Security be extended to another important priority: maintaining the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

Because of the economic slowdown that began in the summer of 2000, the terrorist attacks of September 11, and the ongoing expense of the war, the Secretary of the Treasury last December asked the Congress to increase the statutory ceiling on the Government's ability to raise funds. Seven months later, the Congress has still not acted, although it has routinely fulfilled this responsibility in the past.

The Treasury has had to take extraordinary measures to allow the United States Government to continue to function normally as a result of the failure of the Congress to act. These are only temporary

measures, not an excuse for the Congress to fail to fulfill its duties.

I urge you and Minority Leader Gephardt to show the same spirit of bipartisan cooperation that Senate Majority Leader Daschle and Senate Minority Leader Lott showed 2 weeks ago with their bipartisanship on this important issue.

As we fight for freedom, we must not imperil the full faith and credit of the United States Government and the soundness and strength of the American economy.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker, and Richard A. Gephardt, minority leader, House of Representatives. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.